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TO THE

SENATE AND REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE

U. S. OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

THIS MEMORIAL

IS PRESENTED BY EMMA WILLARD,

In the name and by the authority of American Women

of

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS:

That we are impelled to address your Honorable Body by intense anxiety for the fate of our beloved country, now in the conflict of opinions threatened with destruction. History is not without examples that when deadly strife was raging among men, women came between the hostile parties and persuaded them to peace. So would we do now; and if we could, in addition to our persuasions, bring forward some new ideas, or a plan of settlement, which, being now first proposed, would have no preconceived prejudices to encounter,—a plan which offers a reasonable prospect that peace may be restored, and when attained, may endure and be made permanent,—we should have hopes that such a plan might be received with favor by your Honorable Body; as coming from that sex, whose mission on earth is peace, duty, and righteousness; both in asssisting to devise, and to fulfill.

Our hope and our prayer is, that this noble country, our nursing mother, —our protection and our pride, may be preserved entire. A Continent in extent, an island in security—its harbors opening on the great oceans, it exceeds in geographical position, and commercial advantages, any nation of the present or the past. And while such is its ground-plat, its government is not the mere chance offspring of necessity, but deliberately devised from the teachings of all past ages, by men of the highest intellectual and moral stamp, with Washington at their head; and who, with pious hearts

sought yet higher guidance in the wisdom of God. And that their design to make a better government than any which had gone before, was triumphantly achieved, is proved by our unparalleled growth and prosperity under it,—our liberty and security united; so that our beloved America became the envy and admiration of other nations,—a warning to the oppressor, and a beacon light to the oppressed.

Thus it has been;—but now the picture is reversed;—the pall of darkness is over us—the frown of God is upon us. Wrong is in our borders; for not more certainly may it be known that tempestuous winds have arisen when the sea is lashed into foam, than it may be known by these upheavings of society that evil passions have been at work—producing among us uncharitableness and hatred.

The question now before us then, is, How as a christian people, may we regain the favor of God,—return to the brotherly love which once blessed us, and be again a united and happy people.

When we have become sufficiently humbled by the chastisement which God is now inflicting upon us,—when we have seen how our present course of hatred and disunion is not only destroying our national credit and consequence, but disgracing us in the eyes of foreign nations,—when we have realized what horrid prospects of civil war are before us,—brother fighting against brother, and father against son,—of devastated homes—mourning mothers—bereaved widows—and destitute orphans,—with the further prospect still more horrible—of servile wars, in which a race who deserve the sympathetic care of our whole country,—with deceived hearts, believing that the North are to set them free, shall rise up with intent to do their work of cruelty upon the South, and then to be swept from the face of the earth;—when we are all—North and South—sufficiently humbled to see these and other evils, involving the failure of all business prosperity, till grass shall grow in the streets of our cities,—when we have fully realized that such is the tendency of our present wrong course—then shall we be ready to inquire for the RIGHT,—knowing that whatever is of RIGHT, is of GOD. In IT as in HIM, there is UNITY. Its path is straight, and if we can find it, all—North and South, East and West,—may walk together in it, not disturbing each other, but traveling together in harmony and love. Every step towards it is a gain, and the more cordially it is embraced, the more firmly will it become established. To seek for Right in order to do it, is to draw near to God. If we seek His wisdom he will give liberally and upbraidings shall cease.

Suppose his voice should now audibly inquire of all and of each, "Are you willing to do right?" and there came from a chastened people the universal reply, "I am;"—and again should the voice divine inquire

"Are you ready to be satisfied with others when they do right?" and again there should come up a universal response, "We are,"—then the difficulty which now besets us concerning the colored race, would be narrowed to a single point, and could be put in a way of being settled forever:—not in conflict, but in that righteousness, whose fruit is enduring peace.

What remains will then be *to agree on some method of finding out what the right in this case is, or of making the nearest possible approach to it;* so that those who have the care of the colored race may do it; and which, they thus doing, all others in the Union are to be satisfied in heart,—to approve and to uphold.

In order then that this right path may be found and made known, and since this controversy respects a subordinate but naturally affectionate race, placed by Providence within this nation, and entitled to its care—and since we have reason to fear, that some of the free states refusing them entrance, have in this respect made cruel laws, while other states in which they are held in bondage, may have wronged them by such laws as needlessly separate affectionate married pairs, and part mothers from their little children, —and since at the North there have been wrong opinions prevailing, which have led to words and acts justly offensive to the South, and since we of the North are not able to go thither in person, to see for ourselves that the race for whom our sympathies have been excessively excited, (and as we believe by falsehoods told by enemies for interested purposes,)—your petitioners, for these and other reasons, would therefore suggest with deference, that your Honorable Body, SHOULD CREATE A COMMISSION,—as Guardians of the colored race, and Arbiters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Slavery question, on the foundation of *right*, to be done by the one party and to be firmly and boldly upheld by the other. And this *regardless of the sneers of foreign politicians, who wish to divide us*, so that our power as a nation may not become inconvenient to them —and *the more subtle influences of poetical flourishes* whether found in the Declaration of Independence, or in the beautiful works of Cowper, Campbell, and others, which have injuriously assumed the unphilosophical dogma of the equality of races—and *also throwing off the shackles of that superstition*, which denounces the hereditary master's claim to the service of a race whom he guides by his superior wisdom, and provides for with paternal care, as a sin so foul, that it pollutes the very soil he treads on. The *abuses* of negro servitude, we are no more obligated by these resolves to uphold, than we are bound to justify the tyranny of husbands because we defend the institution of marriage.

The men appointed as Commissioners should be a few, from among those rare characters in whom all confide; not too few to perform the highest,

most arduous, and most responsible labor of the times; and not so many, as too much to divide responsibility, and embarrass action. Perhaps the number five, two from the South and two from the North, the four to choose a fifth, would constitute the just medium. These Commissioners, when chosen, are to devote themselves to find for us that right way which we have presupposed that we are all—North and South—now ready to follow; though it might require the sacrifice of interest, and of pre-conceived opinions. At least a part of those Commissioners should be men profound in legal learning; for in order that they may worthily fulfill their mission, the legislatures, both of the states and the nation, should feel themselves bound to regard, in their legislation, the *unanimous recommendation* of the Board. They might also constitute a high Court of Appeal, in those cases which have heretofore caused so much perplexity—of colored servants escaped from one state and reclaimed in another. and as right to all parties in this matter is their special duty, they will know how to require such regulations as to prevent those modes of wrong to masters—and unfortunate lures to servants, as have borne the name of under-ground railroads.

The South are to do right, the North to become satisfied and then assist and uphold their brethren, both concerning the loyalty and service of their bondsmen; and also in their reputation as righteous doers, conscientiously performing their duties in the care of the sick, the aged and infirm—and therefore having a just title to their labors when in health and strength.

These Commissioners, if rightly chosen, and duly confided in, might, we conceive, save their country;—for it is the slavery question which threatens its destruction;—and thus they might do as great a work as ever was done by man. The poor African tossed about and injured as much by his friends as his enemies, might now feel that he has political guardians in whom he may confide. Those good people of the North whose often misguided, but always conscientious uneasiness concerning his condition—which has in its effects, (though partly through the misapprehension of the South.) wrought the present distracted state of the country—might now quiet their minds. The *word Slavery* which has done so much mischief, should at any rate, even now be dropped.*

And if the Northern mind becomes thus quieted and settled, then the South will gladly resume the work of improving the blacks; and associations will again be formed for their moral and religious improvement, such as the Rev. Dr. Fuller informs us, met in 1835, in Charleston—presided over by the venerable Judge Huger, the friend of Lafayette, and "representing almost all the wisdom and wealth of South Carolina," with

*This plan of settlement competes with no other now before Congress. We hope that proposed by Crittenden, our second Henry Clay, or some similar one, may be adopted. But should the ill-will between the North and South which has wrought the present fearful danger remain, sooner or later the conflict will be renewed.

LADIES

Who authorize Mrs. Emma Willard to present in their names the foregoing Memorial to Congress or any other Public Body, as she may deem advisable.

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delegates from Georgia and other southern States. But all southern efforts for the elevation of the African race were of necessity suspended, when branches of the British anti-slavery society having been inaugurated in New England by George Thompson and other emmissaries which that society had sent over,—incendiary papers were sent to the South, exciting the negroes to do, in the families of their masters, the deeds of St. Domingo, in order to obtain their freedom. The misunderstanding and hatred, which is now producing its direful work, might have been prevented, had southern statesmen noted the fact, that these vile papers were sent in packages to post-offices, and otherwise made to fall into the hands, rather of masters than servants; showing that their intent was to give to southern planters the false idea that their northern brethren were their enemies, when not one in a thousand, knew aught of the work thus going on in their name.

As soon as the commissioners should find that the South had nothing more to fear from Northern agitators, they would not fail to recommend whatever may, without impairing the rights of the master, elevate the servant. One of the improvements of the day derived from the statistics of labor, is that the value of the labor increases in proportion to the intelligence of the laborer; and therefore to promote the intellectual improvement of the servant is to promote the interest of the master. And while absolute sovereigns in these days of reform are granting constitutions to uneasy subjects and modifications in their condition, such as may better secure their affections and prevent their being dangerous, a question may arise whether it might not be better to grant to the ambitious among the negroes, the hope that by extra services of their own, they might obtain, though late in life, a period to their servitude; when they might by emigration to Liberia or wherever their own race is in the ascendant, enjoy their freedom with the dignity of equality, which if they are ever deceived to believe that they may obtain in this country, they will only find themselves betrayed to mortification and disappointment.

When destruction threatens, it is wise to try even desperate remedies. Rome was wont to appoint a single man as absolute dictator. How much more then should a remedy be tried which menaces no danger; but which promises good at every step, and to every party,—elevation to the colored race,—security to the South,—contentment to the North,—and restored confidence and harmony to all. Would that this happy time had already come, when all true American hearts might again exult, that this magnificent domain is once more our own undivided, and truly model Republic; and when—the darkness of these now lowering Heavens dispelled, we might again rejoice in the unclouded smile of our Heavenly Father.

Having brought before your Honorable Body, what seems to us the best mode of settling this direful conflict, which threatens all we hold dear, —we now respectfully defer to your superior wisdom. What we have suggested, if not acceptable, may yet lead to something which will be. Our humble petition is, that those to whom, in our feebleness, we look for help, will not allow party or sectional prejudices to prevail over a spirit of mutual conciliation. We pray you for our sake,—and in the name of every endearing tie which unites man to woman—as father, protector,— brother, and friend,—not to abandon us to feel that we and our children are, by needless animosities, to lose the noble political inheritance left us by the valor and wisdom of our common fathers; but that the grand fabric which they constructed—may be preserved with equal talents and virtues by their descendants;—for which your petitioners will ever devoutly pray.

Note.—The object for which this Memorial is sent forth, is to obtain Ladies' signatures, as indicated by the following blank pages.

Memorials are sent to all those members of the Young Men's Christian Association, who, in the summer of 1859, left their names in the book of their autographs, presented to Mrs. Emma Willard, after their united call, made during the session of their convention in Troy. Indeed in undertaking a work in which—looking to God for a blessing, she assumes to act as a Mother in our political Israel, she considers, that when your respected society—marshalled by states, and introduced by your President,—from Maine to California—from Carolina to Minnesota, came to pay her that filial token of respect—that it was an act on your part, especially as you knew that she had former pupils in all your states, that invested her with the privileged right of coming forward in this hour of peril, and pleading for our beloved country, in the name of American women. And affectionately and firmly have they thus far sustained her. And she now begs of you, and of all other Gentlemen, and all Ladies, to whom this Memorial shall be sent, to procure the signatures of the Ladies of your vicinity, and send them as soon as possible, directed to Mrs. Emma Willard, Brown's Hotel, Washington, D. C.